

VLR-7/2/97 NRHP-2/13/98

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a) Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Grelen

other names/site number DHR File No. - 68-341

2. Location

street & number 15149 Grelen Drive not for publication

city or town Orange vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Orange code 137 zip code 22960

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Catherine H. ... 12/22/97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Grelen

Name of Property

Orange County, Virginia

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: 18, 4, 2, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 20, 5.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling, DOMESTIC/secondary structure, AGRICULTURE/animal facility, AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding, LANDSCAPE/garden

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling, DOMESTIC/single dwelling, AGRICULTURE/animal facility, AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding, LANDSCAPE/garden

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY, REVIVALS/Georgian Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation concrete/brick, walls brick, roof stone, slate, other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1935 - 1940

Significant Dates

1935 - 1936 House Construction
1936 - 1940 Garden Construction

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Blair, Walter Dabney - Architect
Shurcliff, Arthur Asahel - Landscape Architect
Holladay Brothers - Builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
[X] Other

Name of repository:

Grelen - Will R. Gregg - correspondence
University of Virginia - Arch. Library

Grelen

Name of Property

Orange County, Virginia

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 418

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	75,170,0	4,241,000
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	17	75,190,0	4,241,420

3	17	75,228,0	4,241,500
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	17	75,276,0	4,240,370

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy A. Alexander, Property Manager

organization Grelen date April 24, 1997

street & number P.O. Box 309 telephone 540/672-1621

city or town Orange state VA zip code 22960

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

*See continuation sheet for co-owner

name Mr. Will R. Gregg

street & number 2444 Madison Rd., Unit 902 telephone 513/321-7565

city or town Cincinnati state Ohio zip code 45208

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

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Grelen
Orange County, VA

Description

Summary Description

Grelen Farm is comprised of approximately 418 acres that extend along a ridge three miles north of Orange, Virginia. The property is in pastureland and timber and it supports a commercial beef cattle operation. The main house and outbuildings are located on the ridge line and include about fifteen acres of managed grounds. The main house is a two-and-one-half-story Georgian Revival masonry structure built in 1935-1936. The two-terrace kitchen garden and the four-terrace formal garden extend to the east and west of the house and are bordered by informally landscaped lawns. The farming operation is based at the farm yard at the base of the ridge. The farm yard is comprised of agricultural buildings and sheds designed to run a large farming operation efficiently.

Main House

Grelen is a two-and-one-half-story Georgian Revival red brick residence with a slate hipped roof. It was constructed in 1935 - 1936 of red brick laid in Flemish bond. (The brick was purchased from Roanoke-Webster Brick Co., Roanoke, Virginia, and was called Handmade Colonial Face Brick.) The house rises from a corbeled brick water table. The facade has a recessed centrally located six-panel front door surrounded by fluted pilasters and a broken pediment featuring acanthus leaf and egg-and-dart detailing. The front door is flanked by small vertical windows. Two six-over-nine shuttered wooden-sash windows are located to each side of the front door.

The second floor is visually divided from the first by a brick belt course. The second floor is six bays wide and features shuttered six-over-six wooden-sash windows. All second-floor windows are designed in a way that both sashes can be pushed up into the wall, allowing for a maximum opening of the window space. All windows have copper screens, are topped by a flared jack arch, and have bluestone sills. The Virginia slate (purchased from Buckingham - Virginia Slate Corp., Richmond, VA) hipped roof has four six-over-six dormers with hipped roofs.

Massive interior brick chimneys with corbeled caps rise above the roof of the main block of the house. The roof has a boxed cornice with brackets and boxed gutters.

Attached to each side of the main block of the house is a one-and-one-half story, two-bay wing. The stories of the wings are divided by a belt course. Projecting wall dormers with hipped roofs and metal casement windows

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Orange County, VA

Description (continued)

pierce the roof. Both wings have a truncated hip roof, the hip being slate, and the flat top being standing-seam copper. The east wing has a tall chimney with a corbeled cap. The first floor of the east wing has two six-over-nine shuttered wooden-sash windows. The west wing has a porch on the first floor and two bedrooms and baths on the second floor. The first floor of the east wing contains the kitchen and the breakfast room (with a large bay window opening on the rear facade) while the second floor features the nanny's room and two bathrooms. A screened porch with a service bathroom and sitting room projects off the east wing. The flat roof forms a second-floor porch to the children's room. This area has a cast-iron railing and was added later. It is the only exterior change since construction and was done shortly after construction by the original architect.

The rear elevation of the main block has five shuttered French doors on the main floor which open onto a bluestone terrace. The central window of the five-bay-wide second floor has an octagonal window on either side. Three hip-roofed dormers pierce the roof.

The entire scale of the house was designed to accommodate hand-carved wood paneling that was originally created for a penthouse apartment in the St. Regis Hotel in New York City. The paneling was removed from the St. Regis and installed in Grelen by Lagana & Company of Long Island City, New York. The front door opens into a large square front hall. Upon entering the front hall, one walks under the staircase and faces a heavily pedimented double-door entrance into the paneled living room. The living room and the adjacent dining room are the only two rooms that extend across the rear of the building. The dining room has detailed acanthus leaf plaster. Plaster molding in the dining room and front hall, as well as the treatment of the entrance into the living room were installed by Neumann and Even. To the right off the front hall is the library, containing a powder room and a wet bar. A hallway to the left of the front hall leads to the business office (including a powder room) and on into the butler's pantry, kitchen (remodeled in the 1960s), breakfast room and flower work room.

The second floor, when reached by the main stair, creates a balcony over the front hall. To the east are the family rooms; the children's rooms were two adjoining rooms with a shared bath that passes through to the nanny's room. In the late 1940s the wall between the two rooms was removed to create one large room. The nanny's room is next to a service stair that leads to the kitchen. The master bedroom is a spacious room with Mr. Gregg's dressing room and bath to one end of the room and Mrs. Gregg's dressing room and bath to the other. There are four guest rooms, each with a private bath. In 1975 an elevator was installed between the first and

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Orange County, VA

Description (continued)

second floors. The elevator shaft was run through upstairs and downstairs closets so that the integrity of the building was maintained.

The interior flooring is white oak, ordered with 2/3 plain and 1/3 quarter sawn boards supplied by Wood Mosaic Company of New York, New York.

The third floor is finished and contains two servant bedrooms and a bath. The majority of the space is used for storage.

A full basement of poured concrete provides two recreation rooms (reached by a spiral metal stair off the front hall), a mechanical room, storage and work spaces. The main basement stair is in the kitchen.

Outbuildings

The main house complex includes five additional structures designed at the same time as the house. The caretaker's house is a one-story frame and weatherboard structure with two central doors, each flanked by a window. The gable roof is slate and a shed-roofed porch with two square columns protects the front entrances. The smoke house is a square solid Flemish-bond masonry building with a single-door entrance and a slate hipped roof. The garage is a six-bay frame and weatherboard building with elliptical-arched openings and a slate hipped roof. The gardener's house is a one-story frame and weatherboard house with three bays - a central front door and a six-over-six-sash window to either side. A wing to the right of the front door has one six-over-six-sash window. The roof is a gable slate roof. The wash house is a single-bay frame and weatherboard structure with a gable slate roof. All frame and weatherboard structures were covered with vinyl siding around 1975. Other noncontributing outbuildings/structures include a service shed, a chicken house, and dog kennels that were added through the years and have no historic value.

Grelen Farm Yard

The farm yard contains ten barns and sheds, and the farm manager's house. All barns are wood frame and were built between 1936 and 1937. Buildings include: horse barn, chicken house, hog shed, feed bins, equipment shed, two storage sheds, two hay/cattle barns, and slaughter building. The farm manager's house is a one-story frame and weatherboard ranch-type house.

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Orange County, VA

Description (continued)

Additional Structures

Two other residences are located on the property. One is a **tenant house** that was probably built around 1900 and is the only extant building from the previous farm and is noncontributing. It is a three-bay frame weatherboard structure with a central entrance flanked by six-over-six-sash windows. The other is the **farm helper's house** which was built around 1940 and is similar in description to the tenant house.

Gardens and Grounds

The land around the main house includes approximately fifteen acres of naturally and formally planned landscape. Naturalized areas feature a vast variety of ornamental and native Virginia trees and shrubs. Grelen features two planned gardens. The **formal garden** covers approximately two acres and is a four-level walled sunken garden. It is located to the west of the main house and can be approached through the mall -- a boxwood - and hemlock tree-lined lawn approximately 75 yards long (the garden is half way down the mall) -- or from a bluestone walk leading from the back terrace. The top level is a tripartite formal space with brick walks leading to raised corner overlooks. The focal point is a brick-paved overlook located on a central axis that runs through the garden and into the vista beyond. To either side of this overlook are brick stairways that lead to the lower levels. The second level of this garden features eight perennial beds, while the third and fourth levels are grassed. Opposite the garden entrance off the mall is a boxwood-lined mew with a millstone as the focal point. Specimen trees, including a Cedars of Lebanon, a Blue Atlas Cedar and a Deodora Cedar further accentuate this transept.

The **kitchen garden**, a two-level 52' by 52' space on the east end of the house, is in line with the back terrace and the walk to the formal garden. This garden has a center circular bed surrounded by four corner sections and is divided into two levels by a stone retaining wall.

Beyond the formally constructed gardens, vistas were created by plantings of large hardwood trees. This technique was used on the mall, on the axis beyond the formal garden, and on the main drive up to the house. The front drive is bordered by tulip poplar trees and the edges of the front lawns are defined by white pine trees. The mall uses boxwood for the vista close to the house, and then hemlock trees lead the eye on out toward the neighboring hillside. As one stands at the overlook in the formal gardens

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Grelen
Orange County, VA

Description (continued)

and faces cow pastures, a line of trees far beyond the fenced area carries the theme of cultivated grounds past the manicured lawns.

Statement of Significance

Grelen is significant as an example of Georgian Revival residential architecture and landscape architecture that is representative of design standards and styles of the 1930s, and is intimately linked with the early twentieth-century revival of colonial American architecture. Built in 1935-36, the main house is an outstanding blend of Georgian Revival design, restoration and reconstruction architecture of Colonial Williamsburg, and advances in construction techniques of the 1930s. It is a notable example of residential design by architect Walter Dabney Blair. The development of the site is also significant as an intact example of residential landscape design by Arthur A. Shurcliff, a prominent landscape architect and Chief Landscape Architect of Colonial Williamsburg. The gardens and the site plan reflect Shurcliff's Williamsburg experience which he translated from a town setting to a rural landscape so as to complement Blair's architectural design, creating the design and feeling of a Georgian country estate.

Historical Background and Significance

Will R. Gregg, born in Palestine, Texas, in 1893, was the son of Alexander W. Gregg, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for eighteen years. He attended Austin College and the George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C., first practiced law in Oklahoma, and then moved to New York, where he specialized in tax law. Gregg was "one of the outstanding tax lawyers of New York, a member of the firm of Carter, Ledyard and Milburn, 2 Wall Street ... Mr. Gregg was for a time special attorney in the office of the solicitor for the Bureau of Internal Revenue."¹

While visiting Montebello, the family estate of his law partner Watt Dunnington, Gregg and his wife Mary Garland Allen Gregg decided to purchase an adjacent piece of property to serve as their summer residence. In the early months of 1935, Gregg, working through local Orange land agent Manley Carter, purchased 429 acres (some of this has been sold to Grelen Nursery and is not included in this nomination). The property had originally been part of an 8,500-acre tract deeded to James Taylor in 1722. On March 22, 1743, it was purchased by the church wardens of St. Thomas' Parish to serve

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Orange County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

as the parish glebe. By 1935, a dilapidated Victorian house, an old burial ground, thought to have been a slave cemetery, and some farm buildings were all that remained of the property's early history.² Gregg, having much business in Washington, D.C., envisioned a country estate that would allow him easy access to the city. He immediately demolished all standing buildings with the exception of one tenant house, and set about constructing a self-supporting estate.

Gregg was intrigued by farming and was very Jeffersonian in his approach. He envisioned a multi-faceted operation. His goal was to make Grelen self sufficient. Cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens were raised on the property. Corn, alfalfa, clover, and grains were grown in the fields. Potatoes and other vegetables were grown in a large vegetable garden near the main house. Gregg even began a small nursery to provide trees to plant on the grounds. Remnants of the nursery can still be seen today where rows of mature holly trees, magnolias, and Japanese maples create a forest adjacent to the formal garden.

Gregg assembled a formidable team to bring his vision to life. Walter Dabney Blair was hired to design the Main House and nearby outbuildings. Arthur A. Shurcliff was secured to develop the site plans and garden designs. Together through Mr. and Mrs. Gregg, these two men created a modern estate based on the traditional designs that were the popular style of the time.

By the end of 1937, construction of Grelen Farm as it stands today was complete. The year-end inventory lists the following assets - manager's house, barn and barn shed, cattle barn, poultry house, hog house, packing house, meat house, corn house, spring house, three tenant houses, garage for tenant, implement shed, implement shed workhouse, fence, machinery and equipment, and farm work animals. The actual working farm and the main house have always been listed separately because the farm is operated as a business, thus explaining why the main house is not included in the 1937 inventory.

Walter D. Blair (1877 - 1953) was born in Amelia County, Virginia. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1896 and later studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. Blair was a member of the faculty at Cornell University for a brief time before beginning private practice in New York City. Associated with J.E.R. Carpenter for several years, he was first listed as an independent architect in New York in 1910.³ Between 1911 and 1935, Blair designed a number of residential structures in Virginia, including Crestmere, the Charles Gillette residence. He designed the McIntire Public Library in

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Orange County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Charlottesville in 1917, an addition to the University of Virginia Medical Center in 1915, and the Cobb Chemical Laboratory, University of Virginia Medical Center in 1916-1917. In 1929, Blair joined a team of architects assembled by the University of Virginia that included John Kevan Peebles, Edmund S. Campbell and R.E. Lee Taylor to design Monroe Hall and, in 1932, Clark Law School.⁴ Other buildings Blair helped design for the University include:

- 1927 - University of Virginia Hospital, Kitchen and Dining Room Building

- 1930 - Scott Athletic Stadium, University of Virginia

- 1935 - Thornton Hall, School of Engineering, University of Virginia.

He is also credited with the following:⁵

- 1905 - Stahlman Building, Nashville, Tennessee

- 1907 - Empire Building, Birmingham, Alabama

- 1922 - Kingsland Ave. Children's Home, New York.

Blair's design fulfilled Gregg's vision for his new home. Blair's assignment was to design a comfortable country house around living room paneling which came from Mrs. Gregg's parents' (Mr. and Mrs. George G. Allen) apartment at the St. Regis Hotel in New York City (see description). No correspondence provides insight into the discussions which led to the Georgian Revival character of the house. It clearly complemented Gregg's vision of a country estate, and the colonial revivalism taking place. Whatever the dynamics, Blair created a residence that was exquisitely designed for comfortable entertaining and country living. Attached are undated drawings by Blair that were probably a preliminary plan. Also included are elevations and floor plans used during construction.

Based on family correspondence, Gregg and Blair worked closely during the project.⁶ Construction on the main house started in the fall of 1935. All construction was done by the Holladay Brothers of Gordonsville, Virginia. Correspondence on November 22, 1935 to Gregg from the Holladay Brothers reported, "the first floor joists were in place and the finish subfloor ready to go down ... three brick masons were working and two more were starting ... the Bluestone sills and steps had arrived and some sections of brick were up to the sill ... the barn was complete, painted and grading done ... the implement house was done and the tenant house had rough plaster in place." Earlier correspondence noted that the tenant house was to be painted all white, including trim, and the barns were to be painted "barn red" with dark gray roofs. By the fall of 1936 the main house was complete.

It appears that Gregg, not Blair, managed the Holladay Brothers. Family records on the construction of the house include price quotes that

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Orange County, VA

Statement of Significance

Gregg attained and then related to the builders. During construction Gregg had daily correspondence concerning a variety of details. Blair approved major changes and kept abreast of construction activity. Correspondence shows that Shurcliff was consulted concerning placement and materials on outbuildings. No records indicate correspondence between Shurcliff and Blair.

In a final letter from Blair to Gregg dated November 9, 1936, Blair writes " ... this job has been the most pleasant of my career, and that you and Mary [Mrs. Will R. Gregg] have been perfect clients, in your understanding of plans, your sympathetic reception of ideas and your willing cooperation."

The house stands both as a nearly unaltered example of Georgian Revival architecture and a virtual building museum of construction techniques from the 1930s. According to a local heating and plumbing contractor whose father installed some of the original plumbing, it was the first house in central Virginia to have central air conditioning, including duct work that many regarded skeptically at the time. The heating system is a combination of forced air and hot water radiators. Every modern convenience was built in, including continuous running hot water to the bathrooms so guests never had to wait for the water to warm. From light switch placement and call buttons to the thick wooden work counters in the garden room, the house was well thought out and carefully executed to meet the needs of the owners.

Grelen was constructed almost concurrently with the reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg and Williamsburg influences played heavily into the interior decorating as well as the design of Grelen. The similarity of Grelen to the Colonial Governor's Palace is striking. The proportions of the two buildings are very different, but the overall characteristics of the buildings' two-and-one-half story masonry construction and steeply pitched hipped roof with dormers both create a feeling of imposing strength. Grelen as well as the Governor's Palace stands as an excellent example of the 20th-century interpretation of Colonial era architecture.

Arthur A. Shurcliff (1870 - 1957) was born Arthur Asahel Shurtleff (name changed in 1930) , in Boston, Massachusetts. He graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1894 and continued his education at Harvard University, graduating with a second B.S. in 1896. He began his professional career in the offices of Frederick Law Olmsted and by 1899 assisted Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. in establishing the first four-year landscape program in the United States at Harvard University, where he taught until 1906. He opened his own practice in 1904. In 1928 he took his single

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Statement of Significance (continued)

largest commission when he was invited to assist in the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. In his capacity as Chief Landscape Architect for Colonial Williamsburg, Shurcliff combined his avocational interests in American history, craft and old gardens with his professional proficiency in planning and design. Shurcliff did both private and public commissions. In Virginia his work included designing garden restoration plans for the Garden Club of Virginia at Stratford Hall, Smith's Fort, Wilton and Bruton Parish Church.¹

Gregg and Shurcliff no doubt met through John D. Rockefeller, who was a client of Gregg's and the financial force behind the development of Colonial Williamsburg. Correspondence between Shurcliff and Gregg show that Shurcliff was involved in the early siting of the main house and farm yard in the spring of 1935. Planning began in earnest in early 1936, as the house started to take form. (Attached is a copy of Shurcliff's site plan. As well as a Blair plan for the formal garden dated 1940 that was never used.) In a letter dated April 2, 1936, Shurcliff writes to Gregg that he is making numerous visits to Williamsburg and offers to stop in Orange on one of those trips to save on expenses. On May 6, Gregg responds to Shurcliff to inform him of the building schedule - "all brick walls are completed ... putting rafters in second floor ... hope to have wood framing for roof by end of April and slate on by mid-May." Gregg notes he would like to meet with Shurcliff when the roof is on and during that visit he wants to lay out the entrance road and discuss general long range plans. Shurcliff's visit actually took place on May 11 and 12, 1936.

The following months of correspondence discuss a variety of concerns ranging from plantings around the house to the placement of the circular drive in front of the house. In a letter dated May 14, 1936, Mr. Gregg reminds Shurcliff that Mrs. Gregg wants to keep the north view open and Mr. Gregg thinks "a house on a farm should avoid all feelings of being cooped-in." Shurcliff and Gregg worked together to establish the general structure of the gardens with the give and take relationship typical of this process. Their correspondence confirms that the character of the property was established by Shurcliff. An August 10, 1936 letter, for example, notes that Gregg has placed the entrance road exactly as Shurcliff laid it. The letter continues by thanking Shurcliff for helping locate the house, the drive and the new chicken house. Their correspondence and Shurcliff's site visits continued through 1940. (Blair also submitted plans in 1940 but there is no correspondence indicting the reason.) Mr. Shurcliff's strong interest in interpreting colonial gardens comes to life in the Grelen plans. Shurcliff established the central axis across the back of the house, the kitchen

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Grelen
Orange County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

garden, the mall, and the vistas from the formal gardens. In their book *Gardens and Landscapes of Virginia*, Richard Cheek and Rudy Favretti define colonial revival in this way: "Basically it is the revival of plans and features thought to be colonial, as idealized through the eyes and mind of a later time. It is said that colonial revival gardens were designed to 'give the beholder what they expected to see' rather than what actually existed."⁸ Philip Kopper, in *Colonial Williamsburg*, says that "Arthur A. Shurcliff paid closer attention to horticultural beauty than precise replication of colonial gardens - of which little was known in the 1930's."⁹ Kopper's insight suggests the true significance and beauty of the Grelen grounds; Shurcliff designed a garden format with English and early colonial character, but he and the Greggs imbued it with a timeless horticultural beauty.

Footnotes

- 1 The Orange Review, March 14, 1946, Volume XVI, No 2, Page 1, Obituary, Will R. Gregg
- 2 For more early history, please see attached notes prepared by Randolph Grymes for the Orange County Historical Society Picnic Meeting on August 30, 1993
- 3 Data base information from John Wells, architectural historian, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, based on: Ed Lay "Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy" p. 62 and O'Neal, *University of Virginia*; Ward, p. 8
- 4 Albemarle County History, Volume Forty-six, 1988, "Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy", p.62. ,K. Edward Lay.
- 5 *Who's Who in American Architecture*, 1924 ed.
- 6 Correspondence relating to the construction and management of Grelen are currently filed in the Main House office.
- 7 *Pioneers of American Landscape Design, An Annotated Bibliography*, Edited by Charles A. Birnbaum and Lisa E. Crowder, Preservation Assistance Division, Historic Landscape Initiative, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1993, pp. 110-113.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Orange County, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

8 *Gardens and Landscapes of Virginia*, Richard Cheek and Rudy Favretti, Fat Church Publishers, 1993, Little Compton, R.I.

9 Kopper, Philip, *Colonial Williamsburg*, 1986, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York.

Bibliography

Cheek, Richard and Rudy Favretti; *Gardens and Landscapes of Virginia*, Fat Church Publishers, Little Compton, R.I., 1993.

Birnbaum, Charles A. and Lisa Crowder, editors; *Pioneers of American Landscape Design, An Annotated Bibliography*, Preservation Assistance Division, Historic Landscape Initiative, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1993.

Gregg, Will R.; Private correspondence in the family files located at Grelen.

Grymes, Randolph; Orange County Historical Society Notes delivered at the Society Picnic on August 30, 1993

Kopper, Philip; *Colonial Williamsburg*, 1986, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York.

Lay, K. Edward; *Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy*, Albemarle County History, Volume 46, 1988.

Obituary for Will R. Gregg; *The Orange Review*, March 14, 1946, Volume XVI, No. 2, Page 1.

Wells, John; Data Base information from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points:

5. 17/752840/4239940; 6. 17/752700/4239430; 7. 17/751840/4239700

(INCLUDING UTM REF. POINTS 1, 2, 3 & 4 IN PART 10 OF FORM SECTION)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 12

Grelen
Orange County, VA

Geographical Data (continued)

Boundary Justification

The property included in the National Register nomination includes the tract of land purchased by Will R. Gregg in 1935. It was this original acreage that was reviewed by Shurcliff and Blair when determining how they would develop the layout of the property. In 1992, 11.443 acres of the tract were purchased by Grelen Nursery and is currently under cultivation; it no longer functions as part of the working farm and house complex and is therefore not included in this nomination.

Property Owners

Mr. John C. Smith
45 E. 85th Street
New York, New York 10028
212/988-0884

Grelen
Orange County, Virginia

Contributing Buildings

1. Main House
- /2. Caretaker's House
- /3. Smole House
- /4. Garage
5. Gardener's House
6. Wash House
7. Horse Barn
8. Chicken House
9. Hog Shed
10. Feed Bins
11. Equipment Shed
12. Storage Shed
13. Storage Shed
14. Hay/Cattle Barn
15. Hay/Cattle Barn
16. Slaughter Building
17. Farm Manager's House
18. Farm Helper's House

Noncontributing Buildings

- A. Tenant House
- B. Work Shed
- C. Garage
- D. Shed

Sites - Contributing

- I. Kitchen Garden
- II. Formal Garden

Sites - Noncontributing

- AA. Cemetary

GREEN
ORANGE CO., VA.

UTM REFERENCES:

- 1. 17/751700/4241000
- 2. 17/751900/4241420
- 3. 17/752280/4241500
- 4. 17/752760/4240370
- 5. 17/752840/4239940
- 6. 17/752700/4239430
- 7. 17/751840/4239700



220 000
FEET

MADISON MILLS 1.1 MI.

38° 15'
78° 07' 30"

752 2 110 000 FEET 753 754 1.3 MI. TO U.S. 15 755 5' 756

(L) Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

10RAN
5360 11
SCALE